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IN THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A laces tying device comprising a body provided with one or more apertures adapted to receive the lace with which the device is used and provided with readily releasable fastening means adapted to fasten the lace in the one or more apertures and clip means comprising a retaining arm mounted on a spring-loaded hinge provided on the outer surface of the body, said hinge biasing the arm towards the outer surface of the body and the retaining arm being arranged to retain overlapping portions of the lace which, in use, extend from the one or more apertures.

2. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 1, in which the one or more apertures are intersected by a passage, the readily releasable fastening means comprising a spring-loaded clamping element.

3. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 2, in which the clamping element is provided with one or more apertures provided in the body.

4. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 3, in which the clamping element is biased in one direction of displacement so that the one or more apertures provided in the clamping element are normally out of alignment with the one or more apertures provided in the body.

5. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 4, in which the clamping element is provided with a trigger, the operation of which displaces the clamping element to bring the one or more apertures provided in the clamping element into alignment with the one or more apertures provided in the body.

6. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~any of the above claims~~claim 1, in which two apertures are provided in the body, through which the opposite ends of the lace can be threaded.

7. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 6, in which the retaining arm is provided with lace-engaging elements on its underside.

8. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 7, in which the lace engaging elements comprise elongate projections.

9. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 8, in which six elongate projections are provided.

10. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 9, in which the elongate projections extend from the underside of the arm towards the hinge at an angle of less than 90 degrees.

11. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claims~~claim 7 to 10, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

12. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 11, in which the lace engaging elements are provided in the body are formed by a roughened or corrugated surface portion.

13. (currently amended) A laces tying device according to ~~any of the above~~claimsclaim 1, further provided with a display portion.

14. (currently amended) A laces tying device according to ~~Claim~~claim 13, in which the display portion is adapted to display any one of a number of selectable display elements.

15. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in ~~any of the preceding~~claimsclaim 1, in which the tying device is dimensioned for use with footwear provided with laces.

16. (currently amended) An article provided with a fastening using laces and further provided with a laces tying device according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~claim 1.

17. (original) A method of using a laces tying device according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~claim 1, the method including the steps of:

(a) ~~Operating~~operating the releasable fastening means and threading the two opposite ends of the lace through the one or more body apertures, then applying the fastening means to fasten the ends of the lace;

(b) arranging the lace ends extending from the one or more body apertures parallel to one another;

(c) overlapping the lace ends at a point approximately half way along their lengths;

(d) opening the clip means and placing the point of overlap of the lace ends under the retaining arm; and

(e) closing the retaining arm onto the point of overlap of the laces.

18. (new) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 8, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

19. (new) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 9, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

20. (new) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 10, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.